

## Civil Grand Jury

The Civil Grand Jury is part of the judicial branch of government. Consisting of nineteen citizens, it is an arm of the court, yet is an entirely independent body. The presiding judge of the superior court, the district attorney, the county counsel, and the state attorney general act as its advisers.

### Responsibilities

The Civil Grand Jury is an investigative body having for its objective the detection and correction of flaws in government.

The primary function of the Civil Grand Jury is to examine all aspects of county and city government (including special districts and joint powers agencies), to see that the monies are handled judiciously, and that all accounts are properly audited. In general, the Civil Grand Jury seeks to assure honest, efficient government in the best interest of the people.

The Civil Grand Jury serves as an ombudsman for citizens of the county. It may receive and investigate complaints by individuals concerning the actions and performances of county or public officials.

### Confidentiality

Members of the Civil Grand Jury are sworn to secrecy and most of the jury's work is conducted in closed session. All testimony and deliberations are confidential. Breach of confidentiality is a misdemeanor punishable under the penal code.

Grand jurors may act only through the Civil Grand Jury as a body. Individually, they have no official standing, power, or authority. A grand juror may take no official action without prior approval and authorization of a majority of the Civil Grand Jury. The foreperson is the only official spokesman for the Civil Grand Jury.

Grand jurors, in their official capacity, are permitted access to and have the right to inspect prisons, jails, and other government facilities. With limited exceptions, grand jurors also have the right to review official books and records to which other citizens are denied access. Because of their extraordinary powers, privileges, and responsibilities, grand jurors have a special obligation to exercise their authority and carry out their duties in a proper and responsible manner within the boundaries of the law.

### Length of Service

Grand jurors serve for one year. Some jurors may serve for a second year to provide an element of continuity from one jury to the next. Continuity of information is also provided by documents collected and retained in the Civil Grand Jury library. The penal code provides for the transmission of information from one Civil Grand Jury to the next.

Civil Grand Jury service calls for diligence, impartiality, courage, and responsibility. Selection for service is one of the greatest honors a citizen can receive. Being a grand juror provides the citizen the unique opportunity to learn about local governments and to

## Contact Us

### Civil Grand Jury

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be of value to the communities of the county.

